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Guardian East

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Spreading the Health:
MEDCAP comes to
Strezovce / Strezofc
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Message to the troops



Happy holidays

By Brig. Gen. Jerry G. Beck Jr.
MNB (E) Commander –

As we prepare to celebrate the holidays thousands of miles away from our homes, our families and our friends, let us reflect upon those things we are accomplishing here together as an Army family. We are unique in that we share a common bond, a common understanding of the sacrifices and hardships of being a part of that Army family.

I am very proud of the great service you are doing here not only for the United States as a member of its military but also for the entire world as we work to stabilize and protect a very strategic part of Europe. You are doing great work here in Kosovo to further peace, to improve

upon living conditions, and to ensure freedom for people who have been oppressed and downtrodden throughout their history. I know that the people of Kosovo -, Albanian, Serbian, Roma, all ethnic groups are also very grateful for your service.

As we rejoice during this holiday season, let us rejoice in the great work we are doing here. Let us rejoice in the knowledge that we are protecting the innocent and bringing comfort to the suffering. We do this voluntarily; foregoing personal comfort, safety and time with loved ones, to help others achieve the freedom and peace that we hallmark of our great country. Know that you are making a difference for someone less fortunate. Take comfort in



Brig. Gen. Jerry G. Beck Jr.

that knowledge and feel peace in your heart. You are serving selflessly to preserve the dignity of human life in Kosovo. May you find strength and fulfillment in knowing that you bring the message of hope and peace.

I wish you all a safe and joyful holiday season and best wishes to you all for a prosperous New Year!

SEE THE PHOTO OF THE DAY

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Submissions or story ideas related to the MNB(E) mission are encouraged. Send regular mail to MNB(E) PAO, Attn: Editor, Camp Bondsteel, APO AE 09340; send e-mail to guardianeast@bondsteel2.aur.army.mil.

COVER: Sgt. Stacey Lang and Col. Bruce Tancek, both from Task Force Medical Falcon, examine a local resident's teeth during a MEDCAP in Strezvoce/ Strezofc, Nov. 19. Photo by Sgt. Jon Soucy.

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Guardian East

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About Guardian East

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Photo by Sgt. Jon Soucy

Sgt. Stacey Lang, a dental specialist with Task Force Medical Falcon, applies a flouride treatment to a young patient in Strezovce/ Strezofc. Lang, who has been to one other Medical and Dental Civilian Assistance Program, said she enjoys helping people and working with local dentists at the MEDCAP. See page 12 for the story.

Karaoke – A star is born when Soldiers partake in Camp Bondsteel's weekly Sunday night Karaoke. – **Page 16**

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Making their day:

Although it was not an official holiday, Soldiers from the 24th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) made Nov. 23 feel like one by presenting various items to the people living in a temporary refugee camp in Ferizaj/Urosevac. The unit gave the multi-ethnic residents supplies donated from Nebraska.

Story and photos by Spc. Rob Barker

"We collected a bunch of material goods from back home and gave it out to these folks today," said Chief Warrant Officer Nick Krajicek, an air evacuation pilot with the unit.

The unit's members at Camp Bondsteel are not the only ones responsible for organizing and executing the event.

"We put [the information] out to our guard members back home, who are not deployed, and we put it out to our families and friends. Many of the churches got together and sent over stuffed animals, clothing, personal hygiene supplies and things of that nature," said Krajicek.

Everyone involved was excited and happy to be part of the event.

"Handing out these donated items makes me feel proud of our friends and family who donated the articles," said Sgt. Elizabeth Halmes, a flight operations non-commissioned officer in charge with the unit.

With it being so close to the holidays, the event was much more rewarding for the Soldiers.

"It makes me feel good especially this time in the holidays when we are away from our families," said Krajicek. "It's nice to get back in the holiday spirit and help out people who need help."

"This type of stuff makes me feel good and warm," said Staff Sgt. Mitchell Salomons, a medical evacuation crew chief with the company. "And even though we can't be home for the holidays, it feels good to make somebody else's holiday better."

A collage of photos taken Nov. 23, the day the 24th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) gave gifts and donations to a local temporary refugee camp.

1. A toddler poses with a newly acquired stuffed animal and doll from the event.

2. Chief Warrant Officer Nick Krajicek, an air evacuation pilot with the 24th, and Sgt. Elizabeth Halmes, flight operations NCO with the unit, prepare gifts to be handed out in Ferizaj/Urosevac.

3. The families of a temporary refugee camp in Ferizaj/Urosevac begin choosing from the donated items.

4. Coloring books, jump ropes and other toys were just some of the items donated by members of the 24th, their families and friends to the temporary refugee camp.

5. Chief Warrant Officer Nick Krajicek hands off a pair of roller blades to one of the children of the camp.

6. People of all ages were selecting items they wanted during the event.



Courage, Honor, Freedom: Greek military celebrates proud history of armed forces

Nov. 21, "Hellenic Armed Forces Day" is a day of celebration for the Greek Forces, past and present that have fought for freedom.

Story and photos by
Spc. Tim Grooms

The Greek soldiers stood in formation under clouds at Camp Rigas Feraios, as the orators took turns at the podium to talk about what the day meant to them and the history of the Armed Forces Day.

"Today, we religiously pay our respects to those, known or unknown

soldiers, who lost their lives defending our flag, our freedom, and our dignity," said Col. Antonios Karagiorgos, commander of National Tactical Command for Greek forces in Kosovo.

Independence was a word that was strong in the speeches given.

"No country or group of people own freedom," said Brig. Gen. Jerry G. Beck Jr., commanding general of Multi-national Brigade

"Greece stands up today for worldwide freedom and democracy..."

Col. Antonios Karagiorgos,
commander of the
National Tactical Command
for Greek forces in Kosovo



Soldiers of the 506th Mechanized Infantry listen to Brig. Gen. Jerry G. Beck Jr., commanding general of Multi-national Brigade (East), speak about "Hellenic Armed Forces Day." Greek Armed Forces Day is similar to the American Veterans Day, but celebrated on Nov. 21.

(East). "Freedom is the right of all people; that is why the men and women of the Hellenic Armed Forces for the past 40 years have been involved in the fight for freedom all over the world."

"Greece stands up today for worldwide freedom and democracy, according to international rules and agreements, taking part in peacekeeping missions in order to secure the peace in this territory as well as in the whole world," said Karagiorgos.

Greek military history dates back thousands of years. From the Trojan War to the war in Afghanistan, Greek people have fought for and shed their blood for the right to be free. Even today, although they are not fighting for the freedom of their own country,

helping keep the people of Kosovo secure is something they are proud of.

"I wanted to come to Kosovo to serve my country," said Sgt. Vasilios Stamatopoulos, civil military cooperation officer assistant with the 506th Mechanized Infantry Battalion. "I am very proud being here to be able to help people."

The Greek military has a rich history of fighting for its people and helping others in the quest for freedom.

"Our Armed Forces represent a powerful protector," said Karagiorgos, "so that the Greek people may go on with their peaceful works and make our country more prosperous and capable of responding to the calls of present and future times."



From left to right, Sgt. Charitou Chrysafes, Sgt. Papalabides Eyaggelos and Sgt. Taousanis Dimitrioe, of the 506th Mechanized Infantry at Camp Rigas Feraios, Kosovo, prepare to be released from formation after taking part in a ceremony commemorating "Hellenic Armed Forces Day."



Spc. Andres Mercado sorts through packages so they can be organized into bags that will later be delivered to the appropriate camps and units.



Pfc. Kendra Camacho helps sort through the truckload of mail delivered to the main post office on Camp Bondsteel.



Cpl. Jose L. Santini unloads bags of mail delivered to Camp Bondsteel so other unit postal workers can begin sorting through it.

313th Postal delivers during the holidays

Story and photos by
Christina Witten, 203rd MPAD

The holiday season is upon us, and more than likely, sending and receiving mail has become increasingly important to the Soldiers of Multi-national Brigade (East). As Soldiers send holiday greetings and packages and receive those special incoming parcels from home, the diligent Soldiers of the 313th Adjutant General Postal Detachment 1 from Ponce, Puerto Rico, will be working harder than ever to complete their daily missions.

Staff Sgt. Ruben Rodriguez, the unit's non-commissioned officer in charge, explained how it is easy to take for granted all the work that goes into making sure Soldiers send and receive mail in a timely manner.

"Many of our customers just know they are receiving mail," said Rodriguez, "but they don't know who's doing it and how they're doing it."

For most 313th members, work kicks off every day when the mail from Germany arrives at the main post office in South Town Camp Bondsteel. According to Rodriguez, the truck carries an average of 3,000 letters and packages daily. Postal unit Soldiers have just a few hours to unload and sort through the truckload of mail so it can be delivered to locations on Camps Bondsteel and Monteith by afternoon the same day.

Besides daily operations on Camps Bondsteel and Monteith, the unit provides services every Wednesday and Saturday in Pristina/Prishtina, as well as every other Monday in Skopje, Macedonia.

These missions keep the 313th busy, but Cpl. Jose L. Santini, operations supervisor and supply NCO, says he enjoys the hustle and bustle of it all.

"I enjoy doing this," Santini explained. "There is always something to do. There is no time to get bored because we're always working. It was difficult at first, but now we know how to do the job, and we help each other."

Spc. Andres Mercado, a registered clerk with the detachment, noted the positive work environment they have. The steady sound of jokes and laughter are heard as the unit members make it a point every day to keep everyone smiling.

"We are like a family," Mercado shared. "We have come here to do our job and have fun with it."

Even though the unit does everything it



Spc. Damian Vera puts a box into the appropriate bag so it can be distributed to the correct soldier in Kosovo.



Pfc. Manuel Gonzalez ties up a bag of packages ready to be distributed to soldiers in Camps Bondsteel and Monteith

can to keep operations running smoothly, there are occasional problems. One of the more common trouble situations is an incoming package that does not have a Soldier's unit identified.

"When this happens, we look in our computer to find out where the mail has to go because it has to be sent to the right place every day," Rodriguez explained. "It's hard work sometimes."

(See *POSTAL* page 16)



Spc. Josue Pacheco stamps Spc. Courtney Kreft's package so it can begin its journey to the United States.

Lord Robertson visits Kosovo for last time while in office

Story by Maj. John E. Moran IV

The Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Lord George Robertson visited the province of Kosovo, Nov. 17, for the last time while in office. During his visit, he emphasized the sacrifice and hard work of the over 150,000 Kosovo Force soldiers who served in the peacekeeping mission since June 1999. He also expressed his condolences to the more than 200 KFOR soldiers who gave their lives in the quest for freedom here. Lord Robertson also pointed out the superb leadership of past and present KFOR commanders, including the current commander, Lt. General Holger Kammerhoff of the German Army. Lord Robertson ends his tenure as the NATO Secretary General and as chairman of the North Atlantic Council in December, which he's led since Oct. 1999.

Lord Robertson visited Kosovo every year since NATO entered the province in 1999. On this visit, he toured the multiethnic village of Novo Selo/Novoselle, located in the Multi-national Brigade (Northeast).

He spent time with many diverse children in the village.

"They are children," Robertson said. "I do not know what ethnicity they are, but they all deserve a bright future." He also urged the people of Kosovo to continue to work together to improve the quality of life in Kosovo. "This can only be done by putting past differences aside," he said.

The visit ended after Lord Robertson held an evening press conference at the United Nations Mission in Kosovo Headquarters in Pristina/Prishtina. Robertson and Harri Holkeri, chief of UNMIK, were asked several questions about the future role of KFOR in Kosovo. Robertson stated that the Kosovo people "must end the idea of a single-ethnic state." Both men agreed that certain duties would be gradually turned over to UNMIK and that the end state would be a province totally controlled by the local government.

"It would be impossible for me to predict a timetable for such a transition," Robertson said.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Minardi

Lord George Robertson waves as he prepares to leave Kosovo for the last time as NATO Secretary General.



Some of the staff of the Laura Bush Education Center

Registration begins Dec. 22

For more information at Camp Bondsteel visit the Laura Bush Education Center in South Town and at Camp Monteith visit the education center on the third floor of McGraw Hall.

ARMY EDUCATION CENTER BONDSTEEL								
January-February 2004 Term III College Schedule								
Course #	Title	Instructor	Days	Hours	Credit	Location	Start	End
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND								
ALBN 111-1	Elementary Albanian I	Haxhiu	MoWe	1800-2200	3	7	5-Jan-03	11-Feb-04
BIOL 164/161-1	Human Anatomy & Physiology w/lab	Gonzalez	MoWeFr	1800-2130	4	1	5-Jan-04	13-Feb-04
ENGL 101-1*	Introduction to Writing	Rogowski	FrSu	1800-2200	3	2	9-Jan-04	15-Feb-04
ENGL 240-1	Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, & Drama	Rogowski	MoWe	1800-2200	3	2	5-Jan-04	11-Feb-04
ENGL 246-1	The Short Story	Rogowski	TuTh	1800-2200	3	2	6-Jan-04	12-Feb-04
GVPT 200-1	International Political Relations	Jonna	FrSu	1800-2200	3	7	9-Jan-04	15-Feb-04
FSM 201-1	Intro to Computer-Based Systems	Butts	FrSu	0800-1200	3	Computer Lab	9-Jan-04	15-Feb-04
MATH 009-1*	Basic Algebra	Bojarkh	TBA	1800-2200	3	TBA	TBA	TBA
MATH 107-1*	College Algebra	Butts	FrSu	1800-2200	3	4	9-Jan-04	15-Feb-04
SPAN 111-1	Elementary Spanish I	Grey	MoWe	1800-2200	3	5	5-Jan-04	11-Feb-04
SPAN 112-1	Elementary Spanish II	Grey	TuTh	0900-1300	3	5	6-Jan-04	12-Feb-04
SPAN 211-1	Intermediate Spanish I	Grey	TuTh	1800-2200	3	5	6-Jan-04	12-Feb-04
SPCH 100-1	Introduction to Public Speaking	Rogowski	MoWe	0900-1300	3	2	5-Jan-04	11-Feb-04
*Math and English courses marked with an * require a placement test prior to enrollment. Please see the Maryland representative.								
CENTRAL TEXAS COLLEGE								
CJSA 1317	Juvenile Justice System	Scism	MoWe	1800-2200	3	3	5-Jan-04	11-Feb-04
CJSA 1369	Police Systems and Practices	Scism	SaSu	1300-1700	3	3	10-Jan-04	15-Feb-04
Seminar # Title Instructor Days Hours Credit Location Start End								
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND								
CMST 100A-1	Introduction to Microcomputers	Edwards	FrSa	1800-2200	1	Computer Lab	15-Jan-04	24-Jan-04
CMST 100B-1	Introduction to Microsoft Word	Edwards	MoWe	1800-2200	1	Computer Lab	19-Jan-04	28-Jan-04
CMST 100B-2	Introduction to Microsoft Word	Edwards	MoWe	1800-2200	1	Computer Lab	2-Feb-04	11-Feb-04
CMST 100D-1	Introduction to Powerpoint	Edwards	MoTuThFr	1800-2200	1	Computer Lab	29-Dec-03	2-Jan-04
CMST 100D-2	Introduction to Powerpoint	Edwards	FrSa	1800-2200	1	Computer Lab	30-Jan-04	7-Feb-04
CMST 100F-1	Introduction to Microsoft Access	Thomas	TuTh	1800-2200	1	Computer Lab	20-Jan-04	29-Jan-04
CMST 100S-1	Introduction to Microsoft Excel	Thomas	TuTh	1800-2200	1	Computer Lab	6-Jan-04	15-Jan-04
CMST 100G-2	Introduction to Microsoft Excel	Thomas	TuTh	1800-2200	1	Computer Lab	3-Feb-04	12-Feb-04
CMST 100K-1	Accessing Information via the Internet	Edwards	FrSaSu	1800-2200	1	Computer Lab	13-Feb-04	15-Feb-04
GVPT 199S-1	CIA	Butts	Sa	0900-1800	1	4	24-Jan-04	31-Jan-04
GVPT 377K-1	Recent US & Russian Relations	Jonna	Sa	0900-1800	1	7	7-Feb-04	14-Feb-04
MGST 198D-1	Stock Market	Butts	Sa	0900-1800	1	4	10-Jan-04	17-Jan-04
MGST 198E-1	Personal Investment	Butts	Sa	0900-1800	1	4	7-Feb-04	14-Feb-04

ARMY EDUCATION CENTER-CAMP MONTEITH								
TERM III - 5 JANUARY TO 15 FEBRUARY 2004								
Course #	Title	Instructor	Days	Hours	Credit	Location	Start	End
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND								
GERM 211	Intermediate German I	Grey	FrSu	1800-2200	3	301	9-Jan-04	15-Feb-04
SPAN 211	Intermediate Spanish I	Grey	FrSu	1300-1700	3	301	9-Jan-04	15-Feb-04
MGST 140	Personal Financial Management	Butts	MoWe	1800-2200	3	301	5-Jan-03	11-Feb-04
MATH 107	College Algebra	Butts	TuTh	1800-2200	3	301	6-Jan-03	12-Feb-03
GVPT 401	Problems of World Politics	Jonna	TuTh	1845-2245	3	202	6-Jan-04	12-Feb-04
GVPT 100	Principles of Government and Politics	Jonna	MoWe	1845-2245	3	202	5-Jan-04	11-Feb-04
ENGL 291	Expository and Research Writing	Rogowski	FrSu	0900-1300	3	301	9-Jan-04	15-Feb-04
ALBN 111	Elementary Albanian I	Haxhiu	FrSu	1800-2200	3	202	9-Jan-04	15-Feb-04
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SEMINARS								
CMST 100A	Intro to Computers-Hardware/Software	Gjokaj	SaSu	1830-2230	1	201A	10-Jan-04	18-Feb-04
CMST 100B	Introduction to Microsoft Word	Gjokaj	SaSu	1830-2230	1	201A	24-Jan-04	8-Feb-04
CENTRAL TEXAS COLLEGE								
CJSA 1342	Criminal Investigation	Rush	FrSu	1830-2230	3	202	9-Jan-04	15 Feb04



Col. Bruce Tancek, from Task Force Medical Falcon, assists local dentist Urim Tefiki as they examine a local girl's teeth during a Medical and Dental Civilian Assistance Program in Strezovce/Strezofc, Nov. 19.



Patience *for* Patients

Medical and Dental Civilian Assistance Program takes time but pays off with experience.

Story and photo by Sgt. Jon Soucy

The waiting room of the small, cramped medical clinic in Strezovce/Strezofc was filled with the noise of a busload of loud conversations underway simultaneously. The front room of the clinic, which served as the initial examination room, had a claustrophobic feel as villagers sought medical help from Soldiers of Task Force Medical Falcon as well as Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-111th Infantry. The Soldiers were there as part of a Medical and Dental Civilian Assistance Program, which provides basic medical and dental care to those in Kosovo who do not have access to routine care.

Though many of the Soldiers who participated in the MEDCAP have been through previous MEDCAPs, for others it was their first time out.

"It's great," said Spc. Anthony Overstreet, a medic with HHC, 1-111th Inf., of his first MEDCAP. "I like helping people and it's nice to get to work with the kids. It's great to see their smiles when you are helping them," said Overstreet, a father of six.

"It's nice to get to come out and help the community," agreed Cpl. Scott Nye, also a medic in the same unit. "That's one of the most rewarding parts about it," said Nye.

Many Soldiers agreed with Nye and listed getting the chance to help people as one of the most rewarding experiences about the MEDCAP program, but other Soldiers found other areas of the program rewarding.

"Being able to help while working with the local dentists," said Sgt. Stacey Lang, a dental specialist with TFMF, describing what was

most rewarding about the program for her. "It's great to get to work with others in the [dental] field. Some of the things they do are different from how we do things, so you get to learn new things," said Lang, who has participated in one other MEDCAP prior to coming out to Strezofc/ Strezovce.

The opportunity to learn new techniques was also something local dentists who were part of the program found rewarding as well.

"I have learned American ways," said Urim Tefiki, a local dentist who also works as an interpreter at Camp Bondsteel. "American doctors are very friendly and have a lot of experience. I have benefited from that and they have helped to improve my skills. I can use that to better treat my patients," said Tefiki.

Though Soldiers differed on what was most rewarding about the experience, most agreed on the most frustrating part.

"The language barrier," said Nye. "If the interpreter is busy, it's difficult trying to talk to people. They don't understand me, and I don't understand them. It's frustrating," said Nye.

But despite the language barrier, those who provide the medical and dental care feel the patients appreciate their services.

"The people seem very thankful for the help that we can give," said Nye, handing medication to one of the doctors. "I like being able to help people," he said, as the next patient entered the examination room.

Graduation day

Stories and photos by
Spc. Sean McCollum

"You each have a unique opportunity — you're not going to get on a bus or a plane this afternoon, go home and be a sergeant on your next drill weekend. You're going to be a sergeant this afternoon."

The words of MNB(E) Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Jacoby at the Nov. 21 Primary Leadership Development Course graduation echoed across the South Town Theatre to the 33 graduates of Camp Bondsteel PLDC class M002-04. The quick transition from student to leader was one that the present and future sergeants were eager to take on.

"This means I can finally take care of my Soldiers and step up as a leader," said Spc. Dionna Bennett, a military police officer with the 28th MP Company.

Desire alone, however, did not get the graduates a diploma handed to them by the brigade command sergeant major. Many challenges were surmounted to get to this moment, both by the students and the cadre. Some obstacles the students overcame included the grueling physical challenges, school-work, land navigation course, and effectively managing their time.

"The challenge was not having any time," said Sgt. Ken Claycomb, a combat engineer with the 337th Engineer Battalion of his greatest PLDC hurdle. "Getting three hours of sleep a night, always having something to do, never being able to say 'I can just do that tomorrow,'" said Claycomb. "Up until the time we were graduating, we were running." This challenge was met, Claycomb said, by dealing with one mission at a time and

never losing focus of the overall goals.

The focus on the big picture was especially important in the establishment of the academy at Bondsteel. On the cadre side, the difficulty lay in creating an NCO school from the ground up in a forward area. This PLDC class and the one before it were the first NCO schools held exclusively in the Balkans, according to Jacoby. In fact, he said, it was a goal to establish this school even before deployment to Kosovo.

"I came to Kosovo with the idea I was going to do this," said Jacoby. "I came here knowing what I was looking for. From that point on it was 'Okay we're doing it'."

Jacoby was looking out for many things.

"You have to have a land nav course. The challenge is where do you put a land nav course in Kosovo? Because of UXOs [unexploded ordnance], threat environment, and all the things we have going on here."

In addition to this, Jacoby said, classroom space and a location for squad tactics training needed to be found. When all this was acquired, the program needed to receive several safety certifications and accreditations from the Sergeants Major Academy, which supervises all NCO schools in the Army. The result was the first Camp Bondsteel PLDC class on Oct. 23, 2003. Jacoby plans to hold one more class in January before he leaves Kosovo to make way for KFOR 5B.

Jacoby is also leaving the door open for 5B to take over the program by allowing the current instructors to return.

"We've already decided that if they want the people to come back here for 5B to do courses then we will do that."

Claycomb offered some advice to any 5B Soldiers that get the opportunity to attend PLDC here.

"Come prepared," he said.



The graduates of PLDC Class M002-04 sing the Army Song at their graduation Nov. 21.



An astute observer of PLDC class M002-04 would notice that not all of the 33 graduates were dressed in “traditional” green camouflage. Some were dressed in tan desert camouflage. This is not due to a creeping dramatic KFOR policy shift, but rather because three of the graduates, Spc. Luis Santiago, Sgt. Joel Candelario, and Sgt. Stacey Manda are assigned to the 213th Area Support Group stationed in Baghram, Afghanistan.

“My job is the type of job where you have to implement leadership skills,” said Spc Santiago, a graphics design specialist, of what he will take back to Afghanistan from PLDC. “You have to implement good leadership and maintain good focus.”

Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Jacoby declared his intention to train more Afghanistan troops in the next PLDC class when he spoke to the graduates.

Sgt. Joel Candelario, an information systems operator analyst with the 213th Area Support Group stationed at Baghram, Afghanistan, accepts his graduation certificate from MNB (E) Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Jacoby.

**(POSTAL from
page 9)**

Spc. Josue M. Pacheco, 313th finance clerk, explained the occasional difficulty he has had interacting with customers while working as a clerk at the counter.

"Sometimes when customers come in and you tell them they need to fill out some forms, they aren't happy about that," Pacheco stated, "but if you explain that it is a requirement and part of the process, they usually change their mind. That is up to the clerk to explain that."

For the most part, the Soldiers and civilian employees that work on Camps Bondsteel and Monteith have been very satisfied with the services provided by the 313th.

Spc. Jesse M. Bowman II, 282nd Personnel Service Detachment personnel clerk, stated, "The postal service has helped me out greatly! My packages have gotten home within the seven to 14 day time period. The postal service is very friendly and helpful. We need more people like them."

Another customer, David Galbreath, Brown and Root Services Camp Bondsteel fuel system operator, noted how nice it is to be able to send gifts home to his children.

"Sending packages back to family members, that's very helpful to me,"

Galbreath explained. "Every now and then I send a little present to the kids. They always enjoy that, to get a little something from their dad from another place in the world."

It helps improve morale to receive packages from family and friends at home or to receive needed items and supplies, according to customer Spc. Courtney Kreft, 422nd Medical Detachment animal care specialist.

Kreft explained, "I think it has made this a better deployment because I love getting mail. When you're overseas, it's even more important, I think, to get those letters from home."

The postal detachment encountered many obstacles during this deployment, but they have overcome all challenges thus far. Many changes had to be made once 313th Soldiers arrived in MNB(E), and many unit members with little or no experience were forced to learn quickly.

Rodriguez explained, "We're a new unit. This is the first time we've been deployed, and we came over here with many young people. It's been a challenge trying to do everything, but we had good training. We've made modifications making it easier for us, and we've been doing an excellent job. My Soldiers challenge themselves and they want to do the best. I'm proud of what they've been doing."

A star is born

Unit-supported event provides two minutes of fame for Soldiers of Camp Bondsteel.

Story and photos by Spc. Sean McCollum

Ahh! "It's Elvis!" screamed one audience member of the man on stage at the South Town Gym one Sunday night. All the elements were there. The hip swivel, the lip curl, the raised eyebrow, the voice booming out the trademark croon and wrap-up of "thank you very much."

Except not.

Taking his place on stage was Sgt. William Lopp, a military policeman with the 1137th Mili-



Sgt. Reginald Green, a combat medic with Charlie Company, 2-112th Infantry, sings "Tonight I Celebrate My Love" at Camp Bondsteel's weekly karaoke night with help from Sgt. Kimberly Weaver, a physical therapist with Task Force Medical Falcon.

Sgt. Todd Clark, a military policeman with the 28th MP Company, looks to the screen for lyrics at Camp Bondsteel's weekly karaoke night. Clark is a regular at the event and sings mostly country because he "doesn't have the voice for rock 'n' roll." Over 40 people heard Clark sing his rendition of George Strait's "Write This Down."



tary Police Company, in jeans and T-shirt, doing his best to pay tribute to "The King" at Sunday's weekly karaoke night. The 11-year karaoke veteran has been participating in the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation event since the day he landed at Bondsteel.

"That's always the first thing I look for is where they do karaoke," said Lopp. "My thing is that I hope the people enjoy it."

Renee Favors, also known as "Mom" and the MWR specialist in charge of the program, is doing her best to accommodate both hardcore singers like Sgt. Lopp and shy new singers with severe cases of stage fright to try their hand at two minutes of fame. Her goal, she said, is to bring more people out to find their hidden talents and maybe have a little fun in the process.

The genres of songs are as diverse as the singers themselves. Some, such as Spc. Laurie McKinnon, a combat medic with Task Force Med Falcon, prefer "angry girl" music such as Alanis Morissette and Sarah McLachlan. Others, such as Spc. Jon Hallinan, a combat medic with Bravo Company, 2-112th Infantry, prefer to sing hip-hop. Still others sing country or plain old rock 'n' roll. And the word is getting around.

"When it first started we were having karaoke outside. We may have had 10 performers in the past. Now we may get 30 to 40 performers," Favors said. "Some people have found out that we don't throw eggs, we don't throw rocks or tomatoes. We just come out and enjoy ourselves. And we all have a blast."

Favors credits the karaoke success to the various units that show up to support their singers. The support, she said, encourages others to try their luck. Some, if not most, come away from the experience with a good feeling, she said.

"It feels awesome," said Hallinan, a regular

karaoke-goer who sang Chingy's "Right Thurr." "It feels like I'm a star or something."

"It's a sense of release," said Sgt. Reginald Green, a combat medic with Charlie Company, 2-112th Infantry. "And I'm actually giving back to the people because I'm watching them enjoy the song and I enjoy entertaining them."

Green stayed true to the pattern of karaoke night by bringing along a friend who was too shy to sing, and then gently cajoling her to do just that. Sgt. Kimberly Weaver, a physical therapist with Task Force Med Falcon, initially refused the offer to get on stage. She had sung Gloria Gaynor's hit "I Will Survive" in previous weeks with a large group of people, but something stopped her from going up by herself.

"I'm an introvert," she commented on her refusal. "I'm very timid. Stage fright."

"She's going to sing," Green said. "She just doesn't know it yet."

True to his word, after about ten minutes of debating Green was seen dragging a red-faced Weaver to the stage for a performance of "Tonight I Celebrate My Love." When the song finished, the crowd erupted with applause, just as they do for everyone brave enough to sing along to a song in front of them.

And another karaoke star was born.

Spc. Jon Hallinan, a combat medic with Bravo Company, 2-112th Infantry, sings along with the lyrics at the weekly karaoke night.



Concrete plans:

Story by Spc. Tim Grooms

Soldiers from Camps Bondsteel and Monteith volunteered their time Nov. 22 to help lay the groundwork for a basketball and volleyball court; a month-long improvement project to build a combined-sports arena at the Ramadan Rexhepi School in Sojevo/ Sojeve, Kosovo

After the Kosovo Department of Education funded construction materials, Ekrem Hasani, principal of the school, asked if American Soldiers could volunteer help for the task because there was not money to pay for labor. After seeking approval from higher

command, the Americans were granted time to do the job.

"The project would not be realized if the Soldiers did not participate," said Hasani. "The Department of Education did not hesitate [to begin] when they found out about the Soldiers helping because of the work already put into the school."

This is not the first work done at the school. Soldiers of this rotation helped level an area of ground next to the school, and troops of previous rotations helped the school by bringing donations and repairing damages. They built a concrete sidewalk and a fence, painted the rooms in the school, replaced windows, and dug a well

to provide fresh water.

"Every rotation has done something good for the school," said Hasani.

According to 1st Lt. Richard A Weber Jr., executive officer for Commandant Section, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Multi-national Brigade (East), this was no easy task for the Soldiers who volunteered for the job. For the troops to start the mission, they had to clear an area of trees and shrubs, have the area for the slab dug, and then lay the groundwork.

"We laid about 100 yards of concrete without the help of automated equipment," said Weber.



Photo by Spc. Tim Grooms

Maj. Robert J. Thomas, Joint Visitor Bureau deputy chief, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 56th Brigade, 28th Infantry Division (Mechanized) (Formed), helps lay groundwork for the soon to be built combined-sports arena.



Photo by Spc. Tim Grooms

Capt. Garry L. Hahn, commandant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Multi-national Brigade (East) helps smooth concrete for a basketball and volleyball court at Ramadan Rexhepi School, Sojevo/ Sojevo.



Photo by Spc. Tim Grooms

2nd Lt. Drew R. Durian, 1st platoon leader with 337th Engineer Battalion, also known as Team SAPPER, helps lay concrete for a basketball and volleyball court at Ramadan Rexhepi School, Sojevo/ Sojevo .

Although helping the local population is something the Soldiers do on an everyday basis, projects like this do not happen all the time.

"We usually do patrols and get to interact with locals," said 2nd Lt. Drew R. Durian, 1st platoon leader with Bravo Company, 337th Engineer Battalion.

Members of the community also volunteered time and energy to the project.

"Help from locals was nice, because we usually don't get to work with them in this manner," said Durian.

Weber hopes this project is something that will positively impact the children throughout the area.

"We want to show what Americans are about: supporting, sharing, and caring," said Weber. "This is what peace-keeping missions are all about."



Photo by 1st Lt. Richard A. Weber Jr.
Bravo Company, 337th Engineer Battalion

Members of 337th Engineer Battalion pose for a picture during ground preparation at the Ramadan Rexhepi School.



Photo by Spc. Tim Grooms

Soldiers from Camp Bondsteel work hard to get the project done. Local children and adults at the site give a helping hand when asked.

Soul Food: *A message from the Chaplain:*

“... and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.”

By Sgt. Fred Stevenson,
chaplain assistant

In some traditions of the Christian Church the concept of “gift giving” is reserved for the season referred to as Epiphany. The meaning of

Christmas is to receive what God gave to mankind, the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. The season of Epiphany takes its meaning from the story of the Magi coming to the manger and presenting their gifts to the Christ child.

Have you ever thought about those gifts that were given to Jesus and his family? These gifts often remind me of all those inappropriate gifts that we may sometime have received. We might ask ourselves what on earth the person had in mind when they bought that gift for us. Or we might be disappointed that more thought was not put in to buying that gift. The gifts of gold, incense and myrrh seem like such inappropriate gifts to give a baby – especially to a child lying in a manger. After all, these gifts were meant for a king and not for someone in such humbling surroundings.

Gold was meant for royalty and power. It was, and is today, a metal that adorns palaces and majestic buildings. It is associated with the wealthy and powerful.

Incense was the “smoke” of the temple. It was the symbol of prayer. Just as the prayers ascended up to God, so the incense symbolized that ascent to God in prayer. As the psalmist says: “Let my prayer be set forth in your sight as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” Myrrh was a perfumed ointment that was used at the time of the burial of the dead to preserve the body. But in this case as well it was primarily used for the wealthy because of its purchasing price.

How inappropriate these gifts are! Gold, incense and

North Chapel Worship Schedule

Sundays: 0800 - Liturgical Protestant Worship

0930 - Roman Catholic Mass

1100 - Contemporary Protestant Worship 1

400 - Gospel Worship

Tuesdays: 1800 - Roman Catholic Adult Ed. Class

1900 - Roman Catholic Mass

2000 - RCIA

2100 - Contemporary Protestant Choir Rehearsal

Wednesdays: 1700 - Roman Catholic Choir Rehearsal

1830 - Gospel Bible Study

2030 - Gospel Choir Rehearsal

Thursdays: 1900 - Roman Catholic Mass

2000 - Contemporary Protestant Choir Rehearsal

Fridays: 1330 - Islamic Prayer Time

1800 - Shabbat Prayer Time

1900 - Gospel Prayer Time

1930 - Gospel Bible Study

Saturdays: 1200 - Contemporary Protestant Choir Rehearsal

1900 - Gospel Choir Rehearsal

South Chapel Worship Schedule

Sundays:

0800 - Roman Catholic Mass

0930 - Nondenominational Christian Service

1300 - Latter Day Saints Service

1930 - Nondenominational Christian Service

Mondays:

1200 - Roman Catholic Mass

Saturdays:

1930 - Roman Catholic Mass

myrrh are meant for royalty, for the powerful, for the influential, for the wealthy of life. They were not to be given to someone born in a stable, in an insignificant town, so far removed from the place and people of importance. Yet here is where these Magi bowed down, worshipped and presented their offering.

Two great lessons about ourselves and our spiritual lives can be learned during this whole holiday season. One lesson is about giving, and the other is about receiving. In terms of giving, I have found that many people do not give because they think that their offering is not worthy. The feeling is that the gift may not be that important or that what is given is not enough as it compares with someone else's gift. However, to God all gifts are acceptable, so long as they are given in sincerity and to the glory of God. So no matter how insignificant you may think you are, God considers you very important in giving you the gift of his Son to show you his love.

Also let us become humble receivers. Don't be so hasty to make judgments about what people offer to us. Sometimes we even make judgments about what God gives to us and think them to be inappropriate for us. Oh, how little we understand at times. Our lesson then should be one of joyful "thanksgiving."

So let us make this time of year a "holy" time, let us make each day a "Holy Day", a holiday in which we become "cheerful givers" and "thankful receivers." Let us begin each day by thanking God for the gift of life and love. Then as the day goes on, give of yourself that all may know the life and love of the Christ.

Pvt. Murphy By Sgt. 1st Class Mark Baker



www.pvtmurphy.com

Upcoming holiday events

21 Dec. 2003

Camp Bondsteel North Chapel:

1630 - Decorating Party (Soldiers are encouraged to bring their own sentimental decorations, create their own there, or help display the ones on hand. Refreshments and gathering.

24 Dec. 2003

Camp Monteith Chapel:

1830 - Christmas Caroling

1900 - Roman Catholic Christmas Eve Mass

Camp Bondsteel North Chapel:

2200 - Ecumenical Service with special guests: The Collingsworths (played for President Bush and the Today Show)

2330 - Christmas Caroling

2400 - Roman Catholic Midnight Mass

25 Dec. 2003

Camp Bondsteel North Chapel:

0930 - Roman Catholic Mass

Camp Monteith Chapel:

1230 - Roman Catholic Mass

TAX TIME

ARLINGTON, VA (Nov. 26) – The end of the calendar year is quickly approaching and that means only one thing in the tax world, tax statements (W2, 1099R, 1042S). The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) has compiled a schedule of dates when service members, military retirees and annuitants and defense civilian employees can access their tax statements through myPay.

myPay provides a secure method for users to manage their pay account information. Available around the clock, customers can conveniently make changes online, avoiding the hassles of an office visit. Military members and Department of Defense civilian employees will once again have access to view, save and print their tax statements from myPay at <https://mypay.dfas.mil>. For assistance call myPay customer support at 1-800-390-2348.

The DFAS is projecting the tax statements will be posted on myPay during the following periods.

	<u>No earlier than:</u>	<u>No later than:</u>
Military Annuitants	12/13/2003	12/18/2003
DoD civilians	12/24/2003	12/29/2003
Army, Air Force, Navy Reserve and National Guard	12/26/2003	01/01/2004
Military Retirees	01/01/2004	01/05/2004
Marine Corps Active and Reserve	01/13/2004	01/21/2004
Army, Air Force, Navy Active	01/16/2004	01/26/2004

“During 2003, more than 1.2 million users viewed their tax statements on myPay, and we continue to encourage users to view and print their statements online,” said Pat Shine, director of DFAS’ Military and Civilian Pay Services business line. “Timely access to W-2s and other tax statements is another way myPay gives users control of their pay information.”

About DFAS

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service is the world’s largest finance and accounting operation. It provides responsive, professional finance and accounting services to the men and women who defend America. In Fiscal Year 2003, DFAS paid about 5.9 million people, processed more than 12.3 million invoices from defense contractors, disbursed more than \$416 billion and managed more than \$194 billion in military trust funds. For more about DFAS visit <http://www.dfas.mil>.

‘Vast majority’ of Iraq relatively stable, Rumsfeld Says

By John D. Banusiewicz

American Forces Press Service

BRUSSELS, Belgium, Dec. 1, 2003 – Though sporadic violence continues in Iraq, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said here today that “the vast majority of the country” is relatively stable and not in conflict.

Rumsfeld, along with Marine Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, met with reporters at NATO headquarters here, where the alliance’s defense ministers are engaged in a two-day conference.

“There’s no question but that there are periodic incidents where people have been killed or wounded – we know that,” Rumsfeld said. “We also know that the schools are open, the hospitals are open, the clinics are open, that people are engaged in economic activity throughout the country, and that the vast majority of the country is not in conflict. It is in a relatively stable circumstance.”

The secretary said a limited number of people in Iraq are determined to kill both innocent people involved with the coalition and innocent Iraqis. “Those people are also being rounded up, captured, killed, wounded and interrogated,” he said.

Pace, who said he had just visited Iraq, agreed with the secretary’s assessment. “You have those who are bent on preventing the Iraqi people from experiencing freedom – those who look and see what tremendous progress has been made and are afraid that their ‘thuggery,’ their way of intimidation, is in fact being overpowered” by the coalition and the will of the Iraqi people, Pace said.

The vice chairman said it’s hard to tell on the basis of one attack whether the Dec. 1 firefight in Samarra, Iraq, that left dozens of insurgents dead means they’ve changed their tactics or have access to coordinated intelligence. “The fact is that in this particular case, about 50 or so of the enemy did collect together for whatever reason they thought was appropriate,” he said. “They attacked, and they were killed. So I think it would be instructive to them for future analysis when they’re thinking about what they’re going to do next.”

Soldier on the Street

What is the best gift you ever received during the holidays?



Mei Anamosa

Rank: Spc.
Unit: 640th Military Intelligence Battalion
Job: Specialist
Hometown: San Diego, Ca.
Quote: "I'd have to say my Strawberry Shortcake bike when i was six. It was a gift from Santa."



Judith Jackman

Rank: Maj.
Unit: 256th Combat Support Hospital
Job: OIC of intensive care unit and intermediate care unit
Hometown: Sagamore Hills, Oh.
Quote: "My golden retriever, Alley. My husband gave her to me for Christmas 14 years ago."



Joseph Triebel

Rank: Staff Sgt.
Unit: Hungarian Guard and Security Battalion
Job: APC gunner
Hometown: Isztimer, Hungary
Quote: "When I was ten years old I received an air gun from my parents. I still have it."



Latisha Thomas-Duncan

Rank: Spc.
Unit: U.S. NSE, FilmCity
Job: Armorer
Hometown: Columbus, Ohio
Quote: "Being blessed to see another holiday, and being able to be surrounded by family and friends."



Eric Lugo

Rank: Sgt.
Unit: 628th Finance Detachment
Job: FST NCOIC
Hometown: West Chester, Pa.
Quote: "My wife just sent me a Christmas tree. It sure made my holidays merrier."



Christopher Roberts

Rank: Spc.
Unit: 282nd Personnel Services Detachment
Job: Human resources specialist
Hometown: Harrisburg, Pa.
Quote: "That's a tough one. I'd have to say a motorcycle when I was younger."

Scenes of Kosovo

The sun sets behind the mountains around Camp Bondsteel as a blackhawk helicopter prepares to take off for a night mission. Photo by 1st Sgt. David A. Stevenson.

